Proposed Synopsis for Ph.D. Pre- registration Seminar

A Comparative Study of Dark Triad Personality Traits and Aggression in Relation to Gender Disparities in Ranchi District

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1.0. Introduction

1.1. State of the art

The proposed study aims to examine the levels of dark triad traits and aggression among two age groups: early adulthood (20-35) and middle adulthood (40-55), considering gender (male and female) and place of residence (urban and rural).

1.2. Conceptual framework of the study

When we observe around us, we see how people are different from each other and behave differently. The way a person talks, the way he behaves towards himself and others, the way he thinks and understands, the way he copses with different situations, makes strategies and solves problems, etc., are different. All these characteristics make us different from each other and create a personality. All these characteristics of individual which is relatively consistent and distinctive in different situations are known as personality traits. There are two types of personality traits: socially desirable and socially undesirable. When a person has socially undesirable traits or aversive personality traits, he has to face many difficulties in his personal and social life.

People with aversive personality traits may cause trouble for themselves as well for the other people around them whether it might be in their workplaces, educational institutions, social relation, self-control, also in other aspects of their own life.

1.2.1. Concept of Dark Triad

The term "*Dark Triad*" was coined by researchers Delroy L. Paulhus and Kevin M. Williams in 2002. The Dark Triad (DT) refers to a set of three psychological constructs or traits that include ***Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy*****.** All these three sets of traits are considered negative or socially undesirable personality traits. Psychologist described that all these traits as overlapping but distinct. These three constructs are referring to as "dark" because each is considered to contain malevolent qualities. Machiavellianism is a non-pathological personality trait while narcissism and psychopathy are sub clinical personality traits. The term "sub clinical" refers to constructs that have typically been studied in clinical population but are now studied in both clinical and non- clinical settings.

Machiavellianism

Due to work done by ***Niccolo Machiavelli*** in the 16th century, the word "Machiavellianism" originated as a political term. Christie was inspired by Machiavelli. Richard Christies and Florence L. Geis set out to study the thought process and action of those who manipulate others, such as political ideologues and religious extremists. They published their book, titled "Studies in Machiavellianism".

According to research and psychology Today author Dale Hartley's book, Machiavellians: Gulling the Rubes: - 'when psychologists refer to the term, Machiavellian or Machiavellianism, they do not mean Machiavelli's political advice. They refers of cynicism, duplicity and scheming by which master manipulators conceive and execute their agendas.

Machiavellianism is a personality trait that denotes the manipulative behavior, maintaining power and strategic. In those who have this trait, lack of empathy, lack of morality, lack of affect in interpersonal relationships, lack of gross psychopathology, low ideological commitment, callous affect, self-interest, emotional coldness etc. are seen. They avoid manipulating family members **(**Barber,1998**)**, and any other behavioral tactics that might harm their reputation, for example, feigning weakness **(**Shepperd & Socherman, 1997). Basically, Machiavellianism is more interest in use others for their own benefit.

In short, the following are the main elements of Machiavellianism: -

- **Manipulative behavior**
- **Strategic -calculating orientation**
- **callous affect**

Narcissism

The term 'Narcissism' originated from the Roman poet Ovid's Metamorphoses**.** In this mythological story, a young man named Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. When he realized that love cannot be returned, he gradually became despondent or sad and dies. After that it is conceptualized as narcissistic personality disorder (NPD).

Narcissism exists on a continuum that ranges from normal to abnormal personality expression.

The APA (2013, pp.669-670) defines Narcissism Personality Disorder using a general description and nine specific behavioral criteria.

A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following: -

● Grandiosity with expectations of superior treatment from other people.

● Fixated on fantasies of power, success, intelligence, attractiveness, ideal love etc.

● Self -perception of being unique, special, superior, and associated with high- status people and institutions.

● Needing continual admiration from other.

● Sense of entitlement of special treatment and to obedience from other.

● Exploitative of others to achieve personal gain.

● Unwilling to empathized with the feeling, wishes, and needs of other people.

● Intensity envious of others, and the belief that others are equally envious of them.

● Pompous and arrogant demeanor.

In 1925 Robert Waelder state that narcissism is a personality trait.

Psychologist believe that: -

→ Normal level of narcissism is good for psychological health.

→ High level of narcissism can be harmful to both self and others.

→ Extremely high level of narcissism is considered pathological.

Psychopathy

The word psychopathy is a combination of the Greek words psych "soul" and pathos "suffering, feeling". Psychopathy is personality disorder characterized by extensive callous, self-centeredness, superficial charm, lack of empathy, high thrill-seeking behavior, impulsivity, aggression, etc.

A subclinical psychopath is an individual who exhibits the same behavior as clinical psychopath, but the effect on their lives is lessened because the rate and extremity of the behavior is lower.

Hervey Cleckley introduced 16 characteristics typical of the psychopath: -

- **Superficial charm and good "Intelligent"**
- **Absence of delusions**
- **Absence of nervousness or psychoneurotic manifestations**
- **Unreliability**
- **Untruthfulness and Insincerity**
- **Lack of remorse**
- **Antisocial behavior**
- **Poor judgment and failure to learn by experience**
- **Pathologic egocentricity and incapacity of love**
- **Lack of affect**
- **Specific loos insight**
- **Unresponsiveness in interpersonal relations**
- **Fantastic and uninviting behavior with drink and sometimes without**
- **Suicide rarely carried out**
- **sex life impersonal, trivial, and poorly integrated**
- **Failure to meet life plans.**

All three traits of the dark triad are seen in the workplace. Studies have shown that people with the dark triad aspire to leadership position and interpersonal influences. Dark triad is completely related to crime. People who score high in dark triad display more violent delinquency behavior. Such people are more abusive and violent in with their intimate partner. People with such Dark triad personality traits are less likely to have long – term relationships, and are less satisfied with their relationships.

Origins of dark triad

- According to psychologists, each dark triad personalities has a genetic component, although this component is more common in psychopathy and narcissism than in Machiavellianism.

● Environmental factors and formative experiences are also play a role in the development such personality traits. Machiavellian traits are more influenced by the environment.

1.2.2. Concept of Aggression

Aggression is a general word that we use to describe the characteristics of our own and other's behavior. In psychology, aggression is considered as intentional behavior aimed at causing either physical and mental pain.

Aggression might be physical or verbal. Aggression comes in many forms, from direct assault to indirect cruelty. True aggression involves the intent to harm another and intentional harm is considered worsen than unintentional harm.

If seen, aggressive behavior occurs due to many reasons, but in today's era, our schedules have increased a lot; work pressure, family responsibility, maintaining reputation in the society, maintaining good relations, keeping our personal relation good, achieving goals etc. is a burden of many kinds. All these pressures affect us and our behavior becomes aggressive.

Types of aggression

● **Hostile aggression** - This type of aggression arises from the feeling of anger with the aim to cause harm or injury.

● **Instrumental aggression** - In this type of aggression also there is an intention to hurt someone but its purpose is to achieve a specific goal.

● **Relational aggression** - In this type of aggression, relationships are damaged by covert bullying and manipulative behavior. Several studies have found that women show greater relational aggression than man.

Causes of aggression

Aggression can occur due to many reasons, of which the following are important:-

● **Learning :-** aggression is a learned behavior. Therefore, we learn it either because of our personal experiences or because of the environmental around us that we observe.

● **Instinct :-** aggression can be influenced by instinct. Some individuals can suppress it and some are unable to do so and react aggressively.

● **Hormonal imbalance :-** Hormonal imbalance is also a cause of aggression. High level of testosterone contributes to high level of aggression. This hormone is found in both men and women but there is a difference in degree.

● **Physical health and Temperament :-** if our health is bad then it affects our mood and behavior due to which we become aggressive. Temperament is also a cause of aggression. People with bad tempers typically become aggressive more quickly than calmer individuals.

● **Genetics :-** aggressive tendencies are also influenced by biological background.

● **frustration :-** Frustration is a major cause of aggression.

Review of literature

The studies available in the related areas have been categorized under the following:-

.1. Studies related to Dark Triad

.2. Studies related to Aggression

Studies related to Dark Triad

Bodhak and Sushmita (2023), aimed of their study was to analysis the level of dark triad personality traits of the participants and the gender differences of it. Results indicated that there is no significant gender differences observed in the traits of Machiavellianism and Narcissism. Both males and females had similar mean scores in these traits, suggesting that gender does not play a significant role in influencing these particular aspects of the dark triad. However, a notable gender difference was observed in the trait of psychopathy. Males had significantly higher mean scores in psychopathy compared to females, indicating that males in the study exhibited a greater tendency towards psychopathic traits.

Roy and Banerjee (2021) , conducted a study on Dark Triad as a Predictor of Adult Relational Aggression. The study investigated the presence of relational aggression among adults and whether there is a difference between male and female relational aggression. The study also examined the role of dark triad as a predictor of relational aggression among adults. For the sample 45 male and 45 female adults, aged 25 to 35 years, residing in different areas of Kolkata and outskirts of Kolkata are included in the study. Results indicated no gender difference exists between the two groups in terms of relational aggression. Machiavellianism and narcissism were found to be significant predictors of adult females' relational aggression. While for adult males' Machiavellianism and Psychopathy play a significant role in predicting relational

aggression. Overall, the Dark Triad constructs do have a significant role in predicting relational aggression among adults.

Collison, South, Vize , Miller, and Lynam (2020), conducted a study on Exploring Gender Differences in Machiavellianism Using a Measurement Invariance Approach. The study took a recently developed measure of Machiavellianism (the Five Factor Machiavellianism Inventory; FFMI), based on the five factor model, and examined its invariance across gender. Strong (or scalar) factorial invariance was established, indicating that latent factor means can be compared between men and women using this measure. Mean level differences showed that men had higher levels of latent factors related to antagonism and social dominance. In terms of total score, men reported significantly higher mean levels of Machiavellianism. The findings of the study lend support to the notion that mean level differences in Machiavellianism across gender are not artifacts of measurement bias.

Singh, Naeem and Chandiramani (2020), conducted a study on Do aggression and Impulsivity dominate dark triad across genders? The study investigated gender differences in overall Dark Triad (Machiavellianism , Narcissism, and Psychopathy), Aggression, Impulsivity, and impact of Dark triad on Aggression and Impulsivity. T-test suggested significant gender differences in Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Overall Dark Triad, with females scoring high than males. No gender difference was observed in Aggression and Impulsivity. Correlation and regression analyses revealed several significant relationships between the above constructs.

Makim and Shetty (2018), Conducted a study on the relationships between age, gender and the dark triad of personality. Descriptive statistics, t-test and one way ANOVA was used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that there is no significant difference in Narcissism and Machiavellianism between males and females however there is a significant difference in psychopathy between males and females. Also, the F value indicate that there is a significant difference in the three personality traits in reference to different age groups. Post hoc analysis indicate a significant difference in psychopathic behavior between 20-35yrs (early adulthood) and 36-49 (mid life adulthood) age groups and between 20-35yrs and 50-64yrs (mature adulthood)age groups. However there is no significant difference in psychopathic behavior between 36-49yrs and 50-64yrs age groups. Males score higher on psychological tendencies as compared to females. Secondly, psychopathic tendencies are more in participants who are in early adulthood (20-34) than people in midlife (35-49) and mature adulthood (50-64).

Jones and Neria (2015), conducted a study on The Dark Triad and dispositional aggression. The study examined the relationship between the Dark Triad traits with different facets of dispositional aggression. Results indicated that a common Dark triad factor (i.e., callousness and manipulation) predicted a common aggression factor. However, the individual Dark Triad traits uniquely predicted different facets of aggression. Psychopathy positively predicted physical aggression, narcissism negatively predicted hostility, and Machiavellianism positively predicted hostility. Taken together, the findings shed light on the unique elements of the Dark Triad and their ability to predict unique forms of dispositional aggression.

Studies related to Aggression

Shaban and Kumar (2016), aimed of their study is to investigates the level and gender differences in aggression by involving 100 participants (N=100, 50 Males and 50 Females) from Lovely Professional University, Punjab. The age of the participants range from 18 to 25 (Mean = 22.44) years. The results of the study suggesting that female participants experience high aggression (30%) in comparison to male participants (22%). The results also suggest that overall 26% participants experience high aggression indicating that one fourth of the participants are on the higher side of aggression. Further, the results also indicate that though the percentage of female participants is high on aggression, but they do not differ significantly ($t = -.568$, $p > .05$) to their male counterparts on aggression. The results also differ from the general notion that males are aggressive than females. The result suggest that currently the pattern of aggression is changing and, in modern times, both males and females experience almost equal aggression.

Singh and Pareek (2016), aimed to study the effect of gender and age on Aggression. The result of this study concluded that 1) Male respondents have significantly high level of aggression than the female respondents. 2) The Males and females of 31 to 40 age group scored higher on scale in contrast with other two age groups.

Akhtar and Kushwaha (2015), aimed to compare the gender differences in aggressive behavior of adolescents by using a sample of two hundred teenagers consisted of 100 boys and 100 girls, age ranging from 16 to 19 years. Dr. G.C. Pati's Aggression test was used for data collection. The causes of aggression as perceived by teenagers were measured by asking few questions related to it. It was found that boys and girls differ significantly on aggression scale. Results show that the boys were more aggressive than girls as showing mean value of aggressive behavior 11.96 and 6.26 respectively. The data suggests that very small number of

adolescent girls expressed their anger or aggressive behavior freely as compared to boys who have large number to express freely their aggression. Another finding reveled that girls feel guilty after expressing their anger where boys don't feel guilty. As for as causes of aggression is concerned, no significant difference have been found between boys and girls on the factors related to its causes.

Vives and Colet (2010), aimed to explores sex differences in aggression in an elderly sample (aged 65- 96). Results showed that although sex differences in physical aggression were present, the effect size was small and lower than the effect sizes obtained in younger samples. Furthermore, women showed higher levels of anger. Although the results seem to fit with sexual selection theory, they will have to be confirmed by future studies in new cohorts.

2.0. Problem to be investigated

The proposed study aims to examine the levels of dark triad traits and aggression among two age groups: early adulthood (20-35) and middle adulthood (40-55), considering gender (male and female) and place of residence (urban and rural).

3..0. Objectives of the investigation and motivation

The following objectives will be prepared for the present study:-

1. To study the levels of overall dark triad traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) and aggression among total sample and sample sub groups.
2. To study the significant impact of age groups (early adulthood: 20-35, middle adulthood 40-55), gender (male and female), and place of residence (urban and rural) on overall dark triad traits and aggression.
3. To study the relationships between overall dark triad traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy), and aggression in relation two age groups (early adulthood: 20-35, middle adulthood 40-55), genders (male and female), and place of residence (urban and rural).

Motivation

Early adulthood and middle adulthood are important stage of life. Whether man or women, they have to deal with a lot of personal, family and work responsibilities in these stages of life. A variety of obstacles can arise from meeting these responsibilities, including our personality or personality traits. People with dark triad personality traits may cause trouble for themselves

and also for others around them. They often face negative consequences at workplace, educational institutions, social relation and in personal relationships. Having a relationship with such a person can be dangerous. very few studies have been done on this topic. The findings of this research will be helpful in promoting self-awareness so that individual are able to understand their behavior and its impact. This study will help in understanding the individual in all places like educational institutions, workplace etc. This will spread awareness to the individual and the entire society.

4.Reasearch Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are prepared for the present study: -

1. The levels of overall dark triad traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) will vary among total and different sample sub groups based on age groups, genders, and places of residence.
2. The levels of aggression will vary among total and different sample sub groups based on age groups, genders, and places of residence.
3. There is significant impact of age, gender, and place of residence on overall dark triad traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy).
4. There is significant impact of age, gender, and place of residence on aggression.
5. There will be a significant correlation between overall dark triad traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) and aggression.

5.Research Design and Methodology

The Sample

The total sample for the study will be 320 from different areas of Ranchi district, Jharkhand. The selection of samples will be based on purposive sampling technique. It will be based on age (20-35 and 40-55), gender (Male and Female) and place of residence (Urban and Rural).

A 2 × 2 ×2 factorial design will be used in this research and the factors of stratification will be:

Age – 2 groups early adulthood (20-35), middle adulthood (40- 55)

Gender - 2 (Male and Female)

Place of residence – 2 (Urban and Rural)

Table – 1

Sample Design

Place of Residence		**Urban**		**Rural**	
Gender		**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Age	**Early Adulthood (20-35)**	40	40	40	40
	Middle Adulthood (40-55)	40	40	40	40
Sub-total		160		160	
Total		320			

Variables

Independence variables

(A) Two age groups

(B) Gender

(C) Place of residence

Dependent variable

(A) Dark triad

(B) Aggression

Control variables

(A) Participants of Ranchi district only

(B) Participants of only early adulthood and middle adulthood

(C) Only for English medium

Criteria's

Inclusion Criteria

(A) Only men and women from Ranchi district

(B) Participants belonging to two age groups: 20-35 and 40-55

(C) Urban and Rural area

(D) Minimum qualification will be graduation and above

(E) Participants of all castes and religions

Exclusion criteria

(A) Mature adulthood above 55 years of age

(B) Below graduation will not be taken

6.0. Source of the Data and Tools to be used in collection of data

Source of the Data

Data required for the proposed study will be collected from two major sources, such as primary and secondary. Information will be collected from secondary sources like books, articles, and repots which will provide a variety of information regarding dark triad and aggression and its social and psychological consequences. Major parts of the data will be collected through primary source. Primary data collection will take place in Ranchi districts, involving two age groups : early adulthood (20-35), middle adulthood (40- 55). Participants from minimum, education qualification graduation and above encompassing Male and Female, will be selected for the study.

Tools to be used in the Collection of Data

1. Personal Data Questionnaire

2. The short Dark Triad Scale

3. Novaco Anger Inventory (NAI)

1) Personal Data questionnaire

This questionnaire will be prepared by the researcher for eliciting information about the respondents' name, age, gender, place of residence, education. The purpose of the questionnaire is to check whether the individual qualify for the study. The rest of the

questionnaires will be administered only after ensuring the suitability of the participants for the study.

2) Short Dark Triad Scale : Developed by. Paulhus and Jones,(2014). The Short Dark Triad (SD3) is a of 27 items instrument. It is a self report questionnaire. It measures three overlapping socially aversive personality traits namely, Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Narcissism which constitute the dark triad . In this scale some items have a reverse scoring. It uses as 5 – point Likert scale type of responding system, ranging from 1 (strongly Disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale has three subscale to measure three personality traits namely, Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy. Each sub scale contains 9 items. The SD3 Alpha reliabilities are; Mach α= .77, Narcissism α = .71, psychopathy α = .80. Age group – Adult.

3) Novaco Anger Inventory (NAI) :- NAI is a shorter version of the original NAI- long form. It contains 25 items. Novaco Anger Inventory – 25 (Raymond W. Novaco,1975) has items that describe situations that may lead to anger. It is a 5- point scale, ranging from 0 (very little) to 4 (very much). It has a test – retest reliability of between 0.78- 0.91 (Mills, Kroner & Forth, 1998). Age group – Adult.

7.0 Analysis of Data

The following statistical analysis will be used to analyze the obtained data:-

1) **Percentage values** will be calculated to identify level of overall dark triad (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) and aggression among adults in respect to different subgroups of age, gender and place of residence.

2) **ANOVA** will be calculated to determine the main and interaction effects of two age groups : early adulthood (20-35), middle adulthood (40-55) , gender (Male and Female) and place of residence (Urban and Rural) on overall dark triad (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) and aggression.

3) **t-test** will be calculated to find out the impact of two age groups : early adulthood (20-35), middle adulthood (40-55) , gender (Male and Female) and place of residence (Urban and Rural) on overall dark triad (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) and aggression.

4) **The product moment correlation coefficient method** will be used to assess the relation between dark triad and aggression.

5) **Graphical representation** of results will be drawn.

8.0 Significance of study

Early adulthood is a stage of personal, psychological and social development. At this time the person tries his best to establish his identity and is ready to become responsible, self-disciplined, independent and purposeful. This early adulthood occurs from approximately ages 20 to 35, during which the foundation of adult life are gradually formed in marriage, love and even work. Similarly, middle adulthood is also important as any other stages of life. middle adulthood extends from approximately 40 to 55 years of age, the life between early adulthood and old age. Middle- ages people often go through significant changes in their job, personal and social relationships, health, physical changes, psychological changes and their appearance. In these situations, the person plays different important roles, for which it is important for the personality or personality traits of the person to remain healthy. A person having a healthy personality will behave well and behave in a good manner in all situations. Through the study on the dark triad, awareness will be spread among the individual and the entire society and will help in understanding the personality.

9.0. Its relevance to present day problem and needs of the society

The Dark Triad which includes Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy plays a big role in understanding the personality of a person. In personal and social life like interpersonal relationships, love life, educational institutions, workplace etc. it is necessary for a person to behave accordingly. To have such adjusted behavior, it is necessary to have a healthy personality. If a person has dark triad which are aversive personality traits (Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy), then the person manipulates others, show callous affect, has less empathy towards others, more grandiosity, they consider themselves superior to others, they have also lack of anxiety, and such people are seen behaving in a high thrill seeking manner. Such people create problems not only for themselves but also for others. Thus, we see that symptoms of Dark Triad are seen in many people in normal life, but if the amount of these traits becomes excessive then it takes the form of crime. In light of above facts, the present study becomes relevance to present day problem and needs of the society.

10. Contribution to existing knowledge

Man is a social animal who contributes to social welfare along with personal welfare. Every stage of life is important as well as challenging. Early adulthood and middle adulthood are such

a stages in which a person contributes to his own development , to the welfare of the family , as well as to the welfare of the entire society. To play his role in these tasks properly and well, people need the right direction , guidance and motivation to build a healthy personality. The present study has an immense scope for personality development institutions, criminal psychologists, social workers, forensic psychologists, organization managers, education managers, counsellors, etc. to understand personality traits. Therefore, we can say that this study will help in understanding the personality of a person in every sphere of personal and social life.

11.0. Future work

Our research is important for providing a better life and maintaining good personal and social behavior of the individual and the findings of the present study will encourage and invite other researchers in psychology who are interested in studying personal and social behavior and personality patterns. This will generate their insights into the field and several research problems can be made in the areas of dark triad. Till date very few numbers of studies have been done on this topic in India. The research facilitate to the new and other researchers to conduct the studies on the topic with including or omitting variables.

10.0. Tentative Chaptalization

There will be following five chapters in the research report of the proposed research:

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Chapter 2 : Review of literature

Chapter 3 : Methodology

Chapter 4 : Analysis of Data

Chapter 5 : Summary and conclusion

References

Appendix

Note: *It is tentative structure of synopsis; minor modification may be made depending upon the nature of the data obtained.*

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